

THE
SINFULNESS
OF
Neglecting and Profaning
THE
LORD'S DAY.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
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I.  NE of the Ten Commandments which God deliver'd to the *Israelites* by the Hand of *Moses*, was a Precept to them to keep *holy* the Sabbath-day, and to make it a Day of Rest from the ordinary Labour and Business of Life. To which he adds the Ground and Reason of the Command, Because God having finished the Work of the Creation in Six Days, and resting on the Seventh, he set apart this to be employ'd for ever in contemplating that his stupendous Work ; To the End that Mankind might never

forget who was the Maker of it, and to whom they ow'd their Being, and to whom therefore, as in Right of Creation, all their Prayers, Praises and Adorations were due. In the Account of the Creation, as deliver'd by *Moses*, it is said, that God *blessed the Seventh Day, and sanctify'd it*; Gen. ii. 3. and when the Observation of it is particularly enforced upon the People of *Israel*, it is called the Sabbath of Rest, *holy to the Lord*, and a Day *holy to them*, Exod. xxxi. 14, 15. From whence it appears, that one Day in Seven was from the Beginning set apart by God, as a Day of Rest from bodily Labour, and a Day to be employed in *Meditation* and *Devotion*, to preserve in the Minds of Men the Knowledge of the true God, and an habitual Sense of their Duty to him; which, without those frequent Remembrances, would quickly have been lost.

THIS short Account of the Institution of the Sabbath, plainly shows, that it was not only intended for a Day of Rest, and so for the Ease and Benefit of Man and Beast *equally*; but that the forbidding bodily Labour on every Seventh Day, so far as it concern'd *Mankind*, was chiefly intended for a perpetual Remembrance of the Duty they owe to their Creator, and of their Dependance upon him; and this, throughout all Generations, from the Beginning of the World to the End of it. There never was a Time, when those frequent Returns of Rest from Labour, and the employing them in Acts of Devotion, were not necessary to preserve in the
World

World the true Knowledge of God and his Ways, and to revive upon the Minds of Men a Sense of that Reverence and Duty which they owe to him; nor will such a Time ever be, as long as the World lasts. Thus far therefore the *Jew* and the Christian are equally concern'd in the *original* Appointment, and accordingly both of them have their publick Assemblies one Day in Seven, to answer the great End and Design of it.

II. THERE was indeed a much later Appointment, by which the Seventh Day was made the Memorial of a more particular Mercy of God to the Children of *Israel*; and that was, their Deliverance from a State of Bondage and Slavery in *Egypt*. *Remember that thou wast a Servant in the Land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, thro' a mighty Hand and a stretch'd out Arm: Therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-Day, Deut. v. 15.* And it is also declared to have been appointed as a *Sign* between God and them; *Verily, my Sabbath shall ye keep; for it is a Sign between me and you, throughout your Generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you, Exod. xxxi. 13, 17;* that is, a lasting Testimony of their being and continuing the Servants and Worshippers of that God, who was the Creator of the World, and who had delivered them from their Bondage in *Egypt*. But tho' Christians, as such, are not concerned in that Deliverance, nor bound, by

Consequence, to celebrate the Memorial of it, they are bound to keep up an everlasting Remembrance of a much greater ; and that is, their Deliverance from the Bondage of *Sin* and *Satan*, thro' the *Redemption* wrought for them by Jesus Christ. And this Redemption being finally accomplish'd by his rising from the Dead on the *First Day of the Week* ; his Apostles, without departing from the primitive Institution of one Day in Seven, made the Day of his Resurrection, the Day of assembling for the Worship of God, both as Creator and Redeemer. *Upon the First Day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them, Acts xx. 5.* And afterwards, the same Apostle, commanding Collections to be made for the Saints, by the Churches of *Galatia* and *Corinth*, expresses himself thus ; *Upon the First Day of the Week, let every one lay by him in Store, as God hath prosper'd him.* From whence, that Day came to be called by the Christians the *LORD'S-DAY* ; *I was in the Spirit*, says St. *John* in his Revelation, on the *LORD'S-DAY*. And, in Conformity to the Practice of the Apostles, to whom Christ committed the Ordering of his Church, it has ever since continued to be the Day of Assembling for the Publick Worship of God, in all Christian Churches throughout the World.

WHAT has been said thus far, to show Christians how strictly, and for what wise and good Ends, they are obliged to a Religious Observation

and Profaning the Lord's Day.

tion of the Lord's Day, may serve as a general Caution, to take care that they be not wanting in a Religious Regard to so *sacred* an Institution, and thereby bring upon themselves the Guilt, not only of disobeying an express Command of God, but also of defeating his gracious Designs of Good to themselves.

III. AND they are to know, that this Guilt is contracted, either 1. By a *Neglect* of the Lord's Day, or 2. By a *Profanation* of it.

By the *Neglect* of the Lord's Day, I mean, chiefly, an *habitual* Absence from the publick Worship of God, or the attending but rarely upon it; when there is no just and reasonable Hindrance, on account of Health, or other manifest Inconvenience. And in judging whether the Excuse is *real* or only *pretended*; every Christian may give himself full Satisfaction, by observing the Motions of his own Heart, whether he is inwardly glad of the Excuse, or sorry for the Impediment. If the latter, God accepts the Will for the Deed; but if the former be the Case, there needs no other Testimony of their having a Dislike of the Duty, or rather an Aversion to it; and where that is, it will quickly work the Mind into a Persuasion, that it is a Matter of *Indifference*, and not of *Duty*, whether they be present at the publick Assemblies of the Church, or not.

How groundless such a Persuasion is, may be learnt in Part from what has been already said; and is further confirm'd, not only by the

known Practice of Christians in the primitive Times, but also by an express Command of St. Paul to Christians in general, (*Heb. x. 25.*) *Not to forsake the assembling of themselves together*; which in those Times of Persecution was accounted, in Effect, a *Departure* from the Christian Faith; and may well be so accounted at other Times, when it is not Matter of Fear, but of *Choice*. It is our Saviour's Declaration, *That where two or three are gather'd together in his Name, there is he in the Midst of them*, Mat. xviii. 20. or present with them in a peculiar Manner. And, if Men would deal impartially with themselves, there cannot be a more certain Sign that they have no Desire or Concern to improve in Religion, than a wilful Neglect of those publick Ordinances which he has appointed for their Improvement; and which, being of his own appointing, will be attended with particular Blessings upon all those, who conscientiously comply with them. Add to this, the good Impressions which are *naturally* made upon well-disposed Minds, by the Solemnity of the Place, and a serious and reverent Performance of the sacred Offices, and the Examples of Devotion and Attention which they may observe among their Fellow Christians, and which being duly observed, are a seasonable Admonition to others who are less devout and attentive; to remember the *End* and *Design* of their coming thither. For,

4. ANOTHER Neglect of the Lord's Day, next to that of a wilful Absence from the publick
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lick Assemblies and Offices of the Church, is, a Want of due *Attention* and *Devotion* in those who are present at them. And there is a greater Need to inculcate the Necessity of these, in order to a Religious Performance of the Duties belonging to the Lord's Day, because Men are so very apt to content themselves with a *bodily Attendance* upon the publick Devotions of the Church, and in a great Measure to rest upon that as a sufficient Discharge of the Duty of the Day. And as this is an Error, that is both very common and very fatal, it must be thoroughly consider'd and laid open; tho' it must be own'd it is an Error in itself so palpable and absurd, that one would wonder how it should prevail so generally, in *Practice* at least, as in *Fact* it does.

God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit, said our Saviour to the Woman of *Samaria*, (John iv. 24.) to explain to her the Difference of that inward and Spiritual Worship which he was about to establish, and the outward and carnal Services of *Jews* and *Samaritans*. And the Drift of his Reasoning there, is in Effect this: Since God is a Being of a pure Spiritual Nature, without any bodily Substance or Matter; since he has endow'd us with reasonable Souls, that we alone, of all the Creation, might be *capable* of adoring and worshipping him; since also those Souls are cloath'd with Bodies, for no other End but to serve the Designs and Purposes of this World: From hence it follows, that nothing but the *Soul*

can perform a proper and acceptable Service to God. As the Soul is the only *Spiritual* Part of our Frame, so this alone is capable of approaching, and as it were conversing with a pure *Spiritual* Being. As the Soul is the *noblest* Part of our Frame, and given us on Purpose that we might be *capable* of worshipping God, we cannot hope that he will accept the Service of the meaner or the mortal Part; nor is the *Body* of Man, of itself, any more capable of *paying* such a Service, than the Bodies of Beasts. And further, as these mortal Bodies were designed of God, only for earthly and worldly Purposes, they are, *of themselves*, utterly incapable of *Spiritual* and *Heavenly* Exercises. Which yet is not so to be understood, as if the *outward* De-meanour of the Body in the several Parts of *Divine* Service, were a Matter of meer *Indifference*; particularly, that of *Kneeling* in Prayer, which is the natural Posture of *Humility* and *Devotion*, and has accordingly been the Practice of pious and holy Men in all Ages, and ought not to be neglected by any Christian, when it may be done without manifest *Inconvenience*. My Meaning only is, That neither this, nor any Thing else that the *Body* is capable of performing (however fit and reasonable in itself, and enjoined by the Church as conducive to the Ends of Order and Decency, and so, becoming a Matter of *Duty* on those Accounts) may be at all reckon'd on by Christians as a *Religious* Worship, unless it be accompanied with the inward Devotion of the Soul.

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TRUE Devotion is what the Scripture so often describes it to be; the *lifting up of the Heart to God*, the *pouring out our Supplications before God*, or in the Presence of God; and which is yet higher, *the pouring out of the very Soul before him*; the Soul, which is the only Part of us that is *capable* of Devotion, being elevated, and as it were sent up by us to present our Prayers and Praises before the Throne of God. And to keep the Soul *fixt* and *stedfast* in Devotion, is a Work of great Difficulty; greater perhaps than any other Office or Exercise of the Christian Life: Insomuch that nothing is so great a Grief to devout Christians, as the imperfect Performance of these Spiritual Exercises. But their Comfort may be, that God sees and accepts the *Desires* of their Hearts, and will mercifully forgive their Failings and Infirmities.

V. SINCE therefore the publick Worship in the Church, and a Religious Attendance upon it, is so considerable a Part of the Duties belonging to the Lord's Day; it may conduce much to a due Observation of it, to enlarge somewhat more particularly upon the proper Methods and Considerations, by which Christians are to bring themselves to due Attention and Devotion in the Worship of God.

AND the first Step in this, as in all other Designs wherein we desire Success, is, **EARNESTLY** to set about it, and heartily to endeavour in the Course of our Devotions, to keep our Thoughts *stedfastly fix'd* upon the Work.

Work we are engaged in. For Devotion, as it is an Exercise purely Spiritual and Heavenly, does not *naturally* agree with our carnal and worldly Hearts ; which being too much bent on *earthly* Things, are not raised without some Difficulty to the Contemplation of *Spiritual* and *Heavenly* Things ; nor, when they are raised, can they be kept without *greater* Difficulty, to a fix'd and steady Attendance upon them. And although the proper Inference from this *Difficulty* in the Work, is what I am now enforcing ; namely, the setting about it in Earnest, and a diligent Endeavour in every Christian to bring his Heart to an habitual Stedfastness in his Devotions ; yet it is to be feared, that this Aversion to Spiritual Exercises which is in our corrupt Nature, has a very different Effect upon many Christians, and makes them lay aside all *Endeavours* after a Spirit of Devotion, and to content themselves with a *bodily* Attendance on the Worship of God ; or at the best with some short and sudden Motions towards Heaven ; which are quickly interrupted, and the Mind brought back again, to trifle away the Hours of Devotion in worldly Thoughts and Amusements. And in this careless and superficial Way, Christians may be very punctual in attending the Worship of God all their Lives, and yet be no better ; nay, it is very certain, that in some Respects their Condition will be worse, inasmuch as they stand accountable to God for the Loss and Neglect of so many happy Opportunities as he had given them,

them, for the Preparation of their Souls for Heaven ; and do also declare, in Effect, that their Attendance on the Worship of God, is more to keep up their Credit and Reputation among *Men*, who can see no farther than the outward Appearance, than to approve themselves the true Worshippers of God, who sees the Heart, and sets no Value upon any other Service or Worship.

The Uneasiness therefore, and the Difficulty which Men find at the Beginning, in framing their Hearts to Devotion, and raising them to Exercises of a Spiritual Nature ; this Difficulty (I say) ought not to *slacken*, but to *encrease* and *confirm* their Endeavours and Resolutions ; as it is not barely a Difficulty, but such a Difficulty as must be labour'd against, if they desire to be true Worshippers of God. If they content themselves with a *bodily Attendance* upon him, without the Devotion of the Heart, this is not only a *fruitless* Service, and a foregoing the many and great Advantages of worshipping God zealously and devoutly, but it is moreover an hypocritical Service, while they desire to have it believed that they are worshipping God, and yet know, without any Regret or Concern, that their Thoughts are not at all upon him nor towards him ; endeavouring, in Effect, to deceive God as well as Man ; and forgetting what they are told from the Mouth of God himself, (1 Sam. xvi. 7.) *That the Lord seeth not as Man seeth ; for Man looketh on the OUTWARD Appearance, but the*

the Lord looketh on the HEART. And if such be the Misery and Guilt of not worshipping God at all, or of worshipping him in a careless and superficial Manner; there remains no Way to be happy and innocent, to obtain the Blessing and avoid the Curse, but to lay this Matter seriously to Heart, and to shake off that habitual Carelessness and Inactivity in the Service of God, and to resolve and endeavour to bring themselves to the contrary Habits of Attention, Devotion and Zeal. And if, after a long Course of Lukewarmness in the Worship of God, they find a *Tediousness* in Devotion, with frequent Interruptions therein, notwithstanding their *Endeavours* to be fix'd and steady; let them not be discouraged, but rest assured, that if they persevere, Time will every Day make the *Exercise* more easy, and their Hearts more stedfast in attending the Work; and that the Blessings and Benefits which it will convey to them in *this* World, and much more in the next, will be an abundant Recompence for all their Care and Labour about it.

2. AFTER a Christian has convinc'd himself of the Reasonableness and Necessity of a diligent Attention of the *Heart* in all his Devotion, and, thereupon has resolv'd on it, and is ready to enter upon all proper Methods for that End, the next Thing that will require his Care, is to bring his Mind to a reasonable and Christian-like Moderation about the Designs, and Cares, and Contrivances of this World. For
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the Seasons of Devotion are intermix'd with the Business of Life, and are as it were *short Retreats* from it ; and it is the same Heart, and the same Faculties, that are employed about the Affairs of this World, which are also to attend God in his Worship and Service. And the natural Consequence of this is, that if the Heart be too closely knit to the World, and as it were intangled in it, it cannot readily loose and disengage itself, to attend God in his Worship. When the Heart is set upon any Design or Contrivance that is depending, and is in great Doubt and Anxiety about the Event, and our Hopes and Fears are working in their Turns, and the Mind is filled with the Imaginations of that Happiness or Misery which is to befall us, answerable to the Event ; in this Case, the Heart is so fully employed, and every Corner of it so taken up, that there is no Room left for the Thoughts of Devotion ; or if a devout Thought should now and then force its Way, that Concern and Eagerness about worldly Designs, quickly prevails against it, and drives it out. If therefore Men will not be brought to a due Moderation in their Concern about the Affairs of the World, it is in vain to exhort them to banish out of their Hearts their worldly Cares and Designs, when they come to worship God ; it is in vain, I say, to exhort Men to this, because in Truth, it is not in their *Power*, nor can any Thing put it in their Power, but the purging all their worldly Designs with a due Submission

mission and Resignation to the Wisdom and Providence of God. This strikes at the Root of the Evil, and removes the direct and immediate Cause of it, by freeing us from that immoderate Concern and Anxiety about the Events of our worldly Designs, which otherwise swallows up the Heart, and makes it incapable of attending any Thing else. Upon this Principle, as oft as we repair to the Place of God's Worship, we do as it were lodge our worldly Designs in his Hands, and leave them chearfully to his Care; in a full Assurance, that the Issues and Events of them will be such, as he sees most fit and convenient for us; and, in that Assurance as to the Affairs of *this Life*, our Minds are at Ease, and we are rightly prepared to attend the Business of the *next Life*, in a fixed and uniform Devotion of Soul.

3. THE Concerns of the World being thus banish'd, and the Heart left wholly free for Devotion; that which must *fix* our Attention in the Worship of God, is, in *Prayer*, a thorough Sense of our manifold Wants, and more especially of the great Importance it is to us, to receive Spiritual Assistance from the Hand of God; and in *Praises* and *Thanksgivings*, a like Sense of the Divine Goodness and Mercy towards us. If Christians observe the Times of Worship, only because God has commanded it, and they think it their Duty to attend in Obedience to that Command; this Principle may secure their Presence, but it will never be sufficient to raise and in-

in flame their Devotion. For as it is certain, that the End of God's requiring us to worship him, is not, barely, that by the Act of Worship we may show our Obedience or Gratitude to him, but chiefly to supply our Wants, and to derive very great Benefits and Advantages to ourselves; so a thorough *Knowledge* and *Sense* of those Wants, and of the Benefits which true Devotion is the Means of obtaining, is that which alone can make us truly serious and attentive in it. Let but Christians enter upon the Worship of God, in a just Sense of their manifold Sins and Offences against him; and this will teach them to be *serious* in the *Confession* of those Sins, as the only Means of obtaining Remission at the Hands of God. Let us but make ourselves sensible of our natural Weakness and Corruption, how unable we are to resist Temptations, and how slowly we go on in our Christian Course: And then we shall not need to be put in Mind, how much it concerns us to join heartily in all Addresses to God for daily Supplies of Grace and Strength; as knowing, that these alone can be sufficient, to deliver us in the Hour of Temptation, and to make us persevere in our Christian Course, and in God's good Time, to finish it with Joy. Next, let us but seriously consider, how brittle our Frame is, and how uncertain our Condition in the World, and by Consequence, to how many Dangers and Mischiefs we are daily exposed; and there will need no other Consideration to command our Attention

tion and Earnestness, and all those Parts of divine Worship which implore the daily Care and Providence of God over us. In like Manner, when we are to present ourselves before God, let us but first possess our Hearts with a just Sense of the daily Benefits that we receive from his Hands, and of the many Mercies and Deliverances that he has from Time to Time vouchsafed us; and a thorough Sense of these, will not fail to raise up our Hearts to Heaven, in Praises and Thanksgivings to our gracious Protector.

THE Arguments which I have hitherto insisted on, are, many of them, such as may be equally apply'd to the Worship of God, whether in *publick* or *private*. But because the publick Worship of the Church, as being longer than our private Devotion, is more apt to weaken the Attention, and because as it is publick, it is accompany'd with greater *Temptations* to wandering; therefore with more especial Regard to the *publick* Worship of the Church, I add,

4. THAT as often as we are called thither at the solemn Times of Divine Service, we must remember, that the Place whither we come, is the House of God, separated from worldly Uses, and set apart for the publick Worship of Almighty God; that our coming to it is an open Profession, that we have *laid aside* all worldly Thoughts, and dedicated that Portion of our Time to the Worship and Service of God; and that the Worship, which we come to join in, is a *Worship of the Heart or Spirit*; without the diligent

ligent Application whereof, our bodily Attendance will avail us nothing. Let us further remember, that in our Christian Assemblies God is peculiarly present, and we are said to appear before him there in a more peculiar Manner; and let the Remembrance of both these, teach us to set a diligent Guard upon our Hearts, and to behave ourselves with great Reverence and Circumspection, as in the more immediate Presence of God; resolving before-hand, that we will apply our Hearts seriously to the Spiritual Work we profess to be about, and attentively proceed with the Congregation, in the several Offices of the Church.

THE Heart is deceitful above all Things, and the Thoughts of the Heart extremely quick and floating, and therefore great Watchfulness is required on our Part to keep them to their proper Work, and to hinder them from going astray to other Objects; especially in publick, where the Avocations are so many. And if, notwithstanding the greatest Watchfulness we can use, we find our Eyes or Thoughts sometimes wandering, we must rebuke them, as our Saviour did his Disciples in a like Case, *What, can ye not watch with God one Hour?* Does God allow you so much Time for the Concerns of the World; and shall those, or any other Concerns, carry you from attending *him* during that *short* Space, in Comparison, which he has reserved for his own immediate Service and Worship? And let the Wanderings and Imperfections, which even
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the best Christians too often observe in the Course of their Devotions, and especially in publick ; teach us always, at our *Entrance* upon the Worship of God, to beseech him to pour into our Hearts a *Spirit of Devotion* : Such as may keep them in a stedfast Attention throughout ; and so may enable us to perform a duly *spiritual* Service ; such as may be well-pleasing and acceptable in his Sight.

5. BUT there is one Thing still behind, which I must not omit, because it is exceedingly helpful, if not absolutely necessary, to habituate the Mind to Attention and Steadiness in the publick Worship of God ; and that is, to make Devotion our *daily* Exercise, in the Family, or in the Closet, or in both. Between the more solemn Times of publick Worship in the Church, the Mind is engaged in a Variety of Cares and Diversions belonging to this World ; and tho' a Christian be constantly present at the publick Worship on the Lord's Day, and endeavours on that Day to raise himself as much as he can to some tolerable Degree of Attention and Devotion ; yet if he break off there, and return to the Business of his Calling, without any Mixtures of Devotion in the Family or Closet, he will find that Spirit of Devotion to which he had raised himself, greatly abated by the Intermision of six Days, and by the Want of daily Exercise to feed and nourish the Flame : Whereas the daily Exercise of Devotion keeps the Soul in an habitual Preparation to move towards Heaven, and
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by it the Thoughts are more easily disentangled from our worldly Cares and Diversions, and more readily fram'd to attend the Work, at the proper Season of Devotion, whether in publick or private.

6. It is greatly to be wish'd, that daily Devotion were regularly practis'd and established in all Families; as it is the Means of bringing down upon them the Blessings of God, both temporal and spiritual; as it exceedingly helps to keep up in Persons and Families a Spirit of Religion; as it is a daily Check and Restraint from Sin and Vice; and, as it greatly conduces to our Progress and Perseverance in Goodness and Holiness.

BUT where the Business and Circumstances of Families are such, as to render it difficult to keep up a constant Course of *Family Devotion*; there is another Way of maintaining a Religious Intercourse with God, which can be attended with no Difficulty; and that is, for every particular Member of the Family, who is come to Years of Understanding, to use a short Prayer every Morning and Evening in Private, to implore the Blessing and Protection of God, both before they go to Rest, and before they enter upon the Business of the following Day; a Duty, which no serious Christian can wilfully omit. And I will mention another Kind even of *Family Devotion*, which is attended with no Manner of Difficulty, and the Neglect of which admits of no Excuse; that is, the begging of God a Blessing upon our Meals before we sit down, and thanking

ing him for his Goodness and Bounty, when they are over. This is what we commonly call *Grace before and after Meat* ; a Practice so easy, and withal so useful, and so natural, that the Families in which it is not kept up, seem to have no Concern to maintain even a *Face of Religion*.

7. AFTER having said so much of a Religious Observation of the Lord's Day, in a devout Attendance upon the *Publick Worship*, which is the principal Duty belonging to it ; very little need be added concerning the Regard that is due to the *other Parts of the Day*. Because, on one hand it is not to be expected, that they who wilfully absent themselves from the *Publick Service*, or attend it only in a *formal and careless Manner*, will be persuaded to conform to the more *private Duties of the Day* ; and, on the other hand, the same Spirit of Religion, which obliges Men to a conscientious Observance of the *Publick Duties*, will not suffer them to be forgetful of the Duties of a more *private Nature* : Such are, ' the Recollecting and Applying to themselves the good Lessons of Duty which were delivered and enforced at the Church, ' the Reading the Scriptures and other good Books, ' the Examining of their Lives, to see how the Accounts stand between God and themselves ; and if they be Parents or Masters, the instructing those who are under their Care, and appear to need Instruction, in the Principles and Duties of their Religion ; and, the Restraining them from all such Freedoms and Liberties, as are inconsistent with a Christian Demeanour, on the Day which
God

God has set apart for his own Worship and Service. And it is to be wish'd, that all Parents and Masters would possess themselves of two short Forms of Prayer suitable to the Morning and Evening of that Day; for the *private* Use of such Members of the Family as are well disposed, but by reason of their Station, or other accidental Hindrances, cannot pay the Attendance they desire, at the publick Worship of the Church.

8. THE Considerations which have been already offer'd, to lay open the Sinfulness of *Neglecting* the Lord's Day, are of much greater Force to show the Sinfulness of *Profaning it*; which carries in it a large *Addition* of Guilt to the former, and makes the Sin of *Neglecting*, as the Apostle speaks, *exceeding Sinful*: 'When the Leisure which God gives from the ordinary Business of Life for an Improvement in Religion, is not only not employ'd to that End, but is made the Occasion of increasing in Wickedness: 'When it is employ'd in the Ways of Lewdness and Wantonness, of Intemperance and Excess, and Tipling at Houses of publick Resort: 'When it is made a Day of Feasting and Entertainment, so as to break in upon the Seasons of Divine Service, and at once to deprive *whole Families* of the Benefit of attending it: 'When it is made a Day of Travelling, not out of Necessity, but Choice; as so much Time gain'd to further the Business and Designs of the World; and, 'When a Disrelish of the proper Work of the Day, drives People to relieve themselves under the Irksomeness of it, by Gaming, and other irregular Exercises and Amusements

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AND it is not to be wonder'd, that they who fly from the Ways of Instruction and Edification which God has appointed, should be forsaken of him, and hurried by the Devil and their own corrupt Hearts into Ways of Sin and Folly. The Profanation of the Lord's Day, and the Abuse of it to Ends directly contrary to those which he intended, is not only a Disregard, but an *open Contempt*, of his Authority; and it is very agreeable to his Wisdom and Goodness, to withdraw his Grace and give Men over to their *own* Ways, when they declare, by their Behaviour, an avow'd Dislike and Aversion to *his*.

It is a common Observation, (and not the less useful and important for being common) that publick Criminals, when they come to their unhappy End, and make their dying Declarations to the World, frequently charge the sinful Courses in which they have lived, to their Neglect and Abuse of the Lord's Day, as the first Occasion of leading them into all other Sorts of Wickedness. And considering how frequently those Declarations are repeated, and how many other Instances of the same Kinds, tho' less publick, are notorious enough to those who will observe them; they may well be a Warning to Parents and Masters, and all others who have the Care and Government of Youth, to consider a Religious Observation of the Lord's Day, as the best Preservative to Virtue and Religion, and the Neglect and Profanation of it, as the most general Inlett to Vice and Wickedness.

